

# Learning module 1

## The March In

Objective: Students will examine secondary source documents and utilize map skills to understand the reasons why Valley Forge was chosen as the site for the Continental Army's winter encampment in 1777.

Directions: In the first Learning module, students will work as a small group in making decisions and fostering discussion; however, each student must remember that he/she is also moving through the steps of the module from the perspective of an individual Continental soldier who is ultimately assessing his/her ability to successfully "survive and thrive" while encamped at Valley Forge.

**Step A.** Secondary source readings.

**Secondary Source-** one that was created *later* by someone who *did not* experience first-hand or participate in the events or conditions.

(<http://www.library.illinois.edu/village/primarysource/mod1/pg2.htm>)

Students will actively read the compilation of secondary source text- this can be done individually or as a whole group. As they read, they should also fill in the graphic organizer items that accompany the text pieces.

Once students have completed the reading text pieces and the graphic organizer they may award themselves up to **5 Survival Points** on their Survival Rubric based on the self-assessed quality of their work.

**Step B.** Map Skills and Strategic Decisions.

**Tip-** maps can focus on **many different items or perspectives, such as topography, political boundaries, and resources.**

First, students will use the digital map link below to examine the geography of Valley Forge. Students are encouraged to use the different types of maps provided on the toolbar to help create a more broad perspective.

<http://www.trails.com/topomap.aspx?trailid=BGN086-008>

Second, students will use their examinations of the different maps to construct responses to the questions below: If you successfully complete the questions you may award yourself up to **5 Survival Points** on your Survival Rubric.

●If you were General Washington and you had access to these maps in 1777, which two would be the most useful? Why?

●Using your map examinations as resource, where would you have focused the Continental Army's encampment at Valley Forge- be specific!

### Extension Activity

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TinihrDEPf0&list=UUG2PLNkebRAe5HOXi-0aKnw&index=6&feature=plcp>

### Compilation of Secondary Source Text

#### The March In

Text Selection #1.

The series of maneuvers and engagements that led to the Valley Forge encampment began in late August 1777 when Sir William Howe, commander in chief of British forces in North America, landed his veteran army at the upper end of Chesapeake Bay. His objective was to take Philadelphia, the patriot capital. General Washington positioned his Continental Army to defend the city. Howe's skillful tactics, combined with errors made by Washington's army, led to a British victory at Brandywine, the flight of the Continental Congress to York, PA., the British occupation of Philadelphia, and a defeat at Germantown.

**What did General Howe do in 1777?**

With winter setting in, General Washington looked for a place to rest and train his men. He selected Valley Forge, located 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia. It was an excellent choice. Named for an iron forge on Valley Creek, the area was close enough to the British to keep their raiding and foraging parties out of the interior of Pennsylvania, yet far enough away to halt the threat of British surprise attacks. The high ground of Mount Joy and Mount Misery, combined with the Schuylkill River to the north, made the area easily defensible. (<http://www.nps.gov/history/logcabin/html/vf1.htm>)

**Name one POSITIVE reason for placing the army at Valley Forge.**

Text Selection #2.

Valley Forge, 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia, is among the best-known places associated with the Revolutionary War. The village received its name from the iron forge built along Valley Creek in the 1740s. By the time of the Revolution, a sawmill and gristmill had been built in the area, making the place an important supply base for the Americans.

**Define the underlined term "iron forge":**

But before the American Army encamped here, the British army encamped here first. They not only destroyed the forge and mills, but more importantly, they forced Washington to either defend his supply depot in Reading to the west or the city of Philadelphia to the east. With the British army in between, he could not defend both. To make the decision more difficult, not defending Philadelphia would have **political consequences**.

**What do you think "political consequences" means?**

Making a military decision, Washington chose Reading, giving the British a clear path to Philadelphia. On September 26th, British forces marched into the city and took possession of it.

With Valley Forge now free, Washington was able choose it for his winter encampment. The area was close enough to the British forces in Philadelphia to keep their raiding and foraging parties out of the interior of Pennsylvania, yet far enough away to halt the threat of British surprise attacks. The high ground of Mount Joy and Mount Misery, combined with the Schuylkill River to the north, made the area naturally defensible. (<http://www.revolutionaryday.com/usroute202/valleyforge/default.htm>)

**How was Washington able to place his army at Valley Forge, according to the paragraph above?**

Text Selection #3.

Let's start at the beginning. In the fall of 1777, the British had taken Philadelphia, the American capital. Washington's army had attempted to stop the British, led by General Howe, at the Brandywine River, but failed. Now the British Army occupied Philadelphia, and settled in there for the winter.

The Continental Army, as it had the previous winter, wanted to stay close to the British during the winter hiatus. That way, when

fighting resumed in the spring, the Continentals would be ready to stop the British from any further moves. Washington decided to make winter camp at Valley Forge.

Remember, at that time there was no shudder of doom at the very name of Valley Forge. And in fact, it was a good location. Valley Forge was in a settled area, where local people could provide food and clothing if they wished (Washington never forced locals to contribute), and it was the area where the British would have gone outside Philadelphia to forage for food. Cities weren't like they are today, with abundant food through the winter. The British Army would quickly go through the stores of food in town, and would want to go into the countryside to hunt game, just as the people of Philadelphia would have done. Washington made that a lot harder. Valley Forge was also very well situated for defense, making it very difficult for the British to pull off an off-season surprise attack. (<http://thehistoricpresent.wordpress.com/2009/10/21/what-happened-at-valley-forge/>)

**Describe the perspective of the author toward the Valley Forge encampment:**